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ISLAMIC FOCUS

SEARCHING FOR THE

Truth

PRESERVING

Faith

THE TEST OF

Abundance

Ahlan Wasahlan...

FROM THE EDITOR

The lead article highlights the imperative need to preserve our faith. We look at the critical importance of supporting the Maktab system. A case in point of how faith goes away is shown in the example of the Ottoman Empire and the introduction of Western values. We also present heart-warming examples of how people preserved faith amidst the most difficult of circumstances.

Abundance of blessings is also a test. The article on the test of abundance looks at ways we can fail this test and solutions to them. Having everything on a plate can lead to complacency, becoming unmindful, taking things for granted, and becoming conceited. This can lead to bigger spiritual and moral maladies like narcissism and abuse of the blessings we enjoy.

In Searching for the Truth, we take a look at the post-truth society in which we are living,

where the truth is deemed less important than personal or political gain. We go through the pages of history, tracing the route of how truth was sidelined. The article inspires hope by showing how people found the truth despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The article also shines a spotlight on the age of confusion which will characterize the time of Dajjal.

Post Ramadaan, one of the qualities we need to perpetuate is that of generosity. In the climate of fear, insecurity and financial instability, we need to urgently relook our approach to charity and why it needs to be an indispensable part of our lives.

I hope you find the articles thought-provoking and relevant to the society in which we live.

Muhammad Badsha
(Moulana)

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PRESERVING FAITH

Many a Muslim enjoyed the acts of worship associated with Ramadaan – Salaah, Taraweeh, fasting, reciting the Noble Quran, charity and so forth. But there were others who were falling short and some who did not even fast in the holy month. What was missing?

The key ingredient, once we call ourselves Muslims, is to have strong faith (Imaan). Without that we will not feel the need to do actions that are pleasing to Allah ﷻ.

FAITH IS NOT ALWAYS ON ONE LEVEL

1. The Noble Quran alludes to this in Surah Tawbah verse 123: "Whenever a Surah is revealed, some of them ask mockingly, "Which of you has this increased in faith?" As for the believers, it has increased them in faith and they rejoice."
2. The Hadith refers to the need for renewing one's faith, "Your faith will wear out within you just as a shirt becomes worn out, so ask Allah ﷻ to renew faith in your hearts." (al-Mu'jam al-Kabir lil-Tabarani 14668)

DUE TO THIS, THERE NEEDS TO BE A CONSTANT EFFORT TO PRESERVE AND INCREASE THE LEVELS OF OUR FAITH

1. Ibn Masud ﷺ used to say, "Sit with us, so that we may speak of things that may increase our faith." This practice is also reported from Umar and Muaaz ﷺ.
2. Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ used to take his companions by the hand and say, "Come, so that we may have faith (Imaan) for an hour. Let us remember Allah ﷻ so that we increase in faith by obeying Him."
3. Imam Abdur Rahman Awazai ﷺ was asked if faith increases. He replied, "Yes, until it becomes like the mountains." He was then asked if it decreases and he said, "Yes, until there might be nothing of it left."

Simply bringing belief in Allah ﷻ does not mean that life will be easy. "Do people think once they say, "We believe," that they will be left without being put to the test?" (Noble Quran, 29:2)

TESTS AND CHALLENGES TO OUR FAITH WILL COME IN VARIOUS FORMS

One form of a test to our faith is where we become complacent, are content with being Muslim, and make no effort to increase our knowledge of Islam. There's a small rural town in Australia called Mareeba which has Australia's oldest surviving Muslim community. A small group of Albanian Muslim farmers live there, descendants of Muslims who arrived in the early 1920's in search of a livelihood. When you see the community today, you marvel at how they have held firm to their faith with beards and scarves. The Masjid has programs and Huffaaz are being produced. It seems marvelous in how well they have preserved their faith and identity for so long, in so remote an area. The sad part is that it required a shock to the system to realise what they had in terms of faith.

In 1980 some members of the community left Islam for Christianity. This made the others realise that they were taking their faith for granted. Their lifestyle was mimicking the rest of the community – they were too busy with work, were not attending Juma or reading Salaah, they were not fasting Ramadaan and they were drinking alcohol. They started attending classes on Islam with the Imam and reminded one another of their faith through Dawah. Today the result is a strong, vibrant Islamic culture which is even drawing other non-Muslim Australians to Islam. Once they gained knowledge, they became convinced of their faith in Islam and started practicing.

THE MAKTAB SYSTEM

We realise the need for Islamic education in the form of the Maktab system and the efforts of Tabligh where we remind one another of our duty to Allah ﷻ.

1. Allamah Suyuti رحمه الله writes, "Teaching kids the Noble Quran is a fundamental duty of Islam. As a result, they will grow up with a pure nature and the light of wisdom will reach their hearts before temptations and desires overcome it and taint it with the stain of sin."

2. Ibn Khaldun رحمه الله wrote, "Teaching kids the Noble Quran is a special hallmark of Islam. Muslims held firmly to this. They structured its teaching in all Muslim cities in such a manner that faith and Islamic beliefs became entrenched in the kids' hearts. The Noble Quran became the foundation of their knowledge, upon which the skills and talents they later acquired were based. This helped them to overcome the challenges of their teenage years."

3. We are indebted to the pioneer Muslim emigrants to South Africa who set up the Maktab system (afternoon classes for basic Islamic knowledge) which we have. Travel to a country where this is not found and ask the Muslim emigrants how tough it was for them to grow up without this system and keep their faith. When you see adults who cannot read the Kalimah or the Noble Quran, and who cannot make Wudhu correctly, you will cry tears of gratitude for the Maktab teachers who taught us and are still teaching our kids.

4. Iqbal, the poet and thinker of the East, said regarding the Maktab system, "I used to think negatively about the Maktab and that Muslims should be

imbued with Western, modern culture rather. After visiting Europe, I changed my opinion. Leave the Maktab and the Ulama. Without them you will face a situation like Spain where there is little to show for 800 years of Muslim rule except for a few buildings like the Alhambra, etc. Without the Maktab, India would only have the Red Fort and the Taj Mahal to show that Muslims were once there."

HOW FAITH GOES AWAY

The problem with not having the knowledge of the Islamic way of life and as a result not being convinced that Islam's political, educational, financial, judicial and social systems are superior, is that Muslims start to feel that other lifestyles are better and more progressive. They build an inferiority complex regarding the system of Islam.

1. This happened in the Ottoman Empire over a period of time. In the Tulip Period of 1717-1730 some people under the influence of the grand vizier Ebrahim Pasha began to dress like the Europeans. The Ottoman Palace began to imitate European court life and pleasures. Sultan Ahmet II bought lavish summer residences, and parties resembling those of the French aristocracy were held. At the same time, the rise of nationalism and not a pan-Islamic identity was fuelled by Russia, Austria, and France. Muslims began to identify as Turk or Arab first. This culminated in the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire which shattered Muslims politically to result in the mess of arbitrary borders and micro countries we now have.

2. In 1828 the turban was replaced with the Fez cap in social circles. This led to it being banned and replaced with the European hat a century later.

3. The Young Turks group emerged out of all this, and they looked to Europe as a blueprint for an ideal society. The Tanzimat Period called for modernisation of Islamic Law and of making it acceptable to the West. The Young Turks pushed for Islamic laws to be replaced.

4. This gradual drift to the West culminated in the arrival of Mustafa Kemal Attaturk in 1917 who overthrew the Khilafah, removed the Ottoman Sultan, replaced the Arabic script with a Latin one, banned the Fez and turban, forced the Athan to be given in Turkish for some years, replaced the guidance of the Ulama with Western science and brought women out into the public sphere.

HOW FAITH WAS PRESERVED

Amidst this severe test of the faith of the people, there were still those who worked hard to preserve it. People like Bediuzzaman Saeed Nursi wrote books on Islam while in exile and had them smuggled out to the people. He in fact said that this test was a blessing for it allowed true Islam to emerge where there might have been a distorted version.

1. The effect of these sacrifices and efforts to preserve faith saw Adnan Menderes become Prime Minister of Turkey in 1950. He brought back the Arabic Athan and reopened thousands of Masjids. He was executed by the military in 1960 but the spirit of faith continued to grow steadily in secret until the new current government unbanned the Hijab and Islam is once again flourishing in Turkey.

2. Russia during the communist Soviet Union is another case in point. The Soviet Union had 25,000 Masjids in 1917. Under the communists only 500 remained active. Russia itself had 15,000 of those Masjids in 1917

and only 100 remained active in the years to follow. Russian Muslims preserved their faith in secret, hiding copies of the Noble Quran. The Hajj was largely stopped and there were no Maktabas except two officially controlled ones. An old lady recounts how her granny used to teach her Surah Ikhlâas in secret, telling her it was magic words. Her granny would hide and fast at the great threat of being found out. That sort of sacrifice to preserve faith in the most trying of times resulted in 8,000 Masjids being built in Russia after the fall of Communism from 1995-2015.

3. In the Americas, among the slaves brought from Africa, and estimated 900,000 were Muslim with tens of thousands of these arriving in the USA. They tried, under the most difficult of circumstances, to keep their faith with prayer. Charles Bell, in his 1837 autobiography, wrote about many whom he saw praying five times a day in a language he didn't understand which was obviously Arabic.

4. Yarrow Mamout was taken as a slave in 1752 at the age of 16 to America. After 44 years of slavery, he was freed and bought a house in Washington. He was often seen praising Allah ﷻ according to Charles Peale. Throughout his life he told people not to eat pork or drink alcohol.

5. Omar bin Said was born in Senegal in 1770. He passed away in 1863 in North Carolina, USA after 56 years in slavery. He was a Muslim scholar and wrote books on Fiqh in Arabic, together with Surahs of the Noble Quran.

This was how these people passed the test to their faith. With the increasing challenges to our faith in the form of being attracted to the non-Muslim way of life through

social media, movies and the people around us, we need to prioritise working on strengthening our faith. We need to be confident in the wisdom of Islamic teachings in all spheres of life as compared to other lifestyles.

A proposal was given by the Prophet ﷺ on behalf of Julaibeeb ؓ for an Ansaari girl. She was known for her beauty, modesty and piety. Her parents said that they needed to consult before giving an answer. She on the other hand said that if it is a request from the Prophet ﷺ there will only be goodness in it and no harm for me. The Prophet ﷺ made Dua for them and their house was full of blessings and lacked for nothing. When Julaibeeb ؓ was martyred, the Prophet ﷺ enshrouded him personally, and his wife became the most sought-after widow in Madinah Munawwarah.

"It is not for a believing man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger decree a matter, to have any other choice in that matter." (Noble Quran 33:36)

Build confidence in Islam through study. Do actions that will strengthen our faith. Help others find and preserve their faith. Attend the gatherings of Imaan to refresh our faith. Join the Tabligh programs and classes on Islam. Supporting one another in building our faith and equipping ourselves with the Islamic tools is critical to meet the ever-intensifying challenges to our faith. Gaza is testament to the fruits of building faith; despite facing ongoing genocide, slaughter, starvation and being abandoned by the world, we still see them praising Allah ﷻ, reading Salaah amidst the ruins of Masjids and reciting the Noble Quran.

Build faith and it will stand by us in times of despair and anguish.



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The background image is a highly detailed and opulent interior space. It features a large, multi-tiered chandelier with numerous lit candles and crystal pendants hanging from a vaulted ceiling. Below the chandelier, there are large arched windows with white frames and sheer curtains, allowing bright light to filter into the room. In the foreground, a plush, tufted sofa with a white and cream striped cushion and several yellow pillows is visible. In front of the sofa is a round, ornate coffee table with a polished surface, holding a silver teapot and several cups of tea. The overall atmosphere is one of elegance and comfort.

THE TEST OF *Abundance*

We tend to identify going through difficulties and problems as a test. In times of financial turmoil or health problems, we turn to Allah ﷻ, make Dua and try to rectify the situation. But there is a second type of test and this is when everything is going smoothly in life.

We tend to identify going through difficulties and problems as a test. In times of financial turmoil or health problems, we turn to Allah ﷻ, make Dua and try to rectify the situation. But there is a second type of test and this is when everything is going smoothly in life. Allah ﷻ **terms both these situations in life as a test: "As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." But when he tests him, and thus restricts his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me." (Noble Quran, 89:15-16)**

In this article we will explore aspects of the test of having abundance, of affluence and of life going your way.

1 "Every nation has a test, and the test of my nation is wealth." (Tirmidhi) Wealth comes with the test of how we approach earning it, spending it and our attitude to others when we have it.

2 Ahmed ibn Hambal رحمه الله said, "We were tested with hard times and we adopted patience, then we were tested with affluence and we don't know how we have fared with this test."

3 The Prophet ﷺ remarked, "By Allah, it is not poverty that I fear for you, but rather I fear you will be given the wealth of the world, just as it was given to those before you. You will compete for it just as they competed for it, and it will ruin you just as it ruined them." (Bukhari) Rivalry and competition for the world's treasures leads to destruction.

We need to identify and recognise this test of abundance so that we may be able to pass it. Here are some ways in which we can fail the test of having blessings, wealth, health, intellect and business acumen.

BECOMING COMPLACENT

If we have security, health, food, and other blessings with ease, we can start becoming too comfortable. People stagnate when there is too much order and system and tend not to develop. Then some disruption is needed to make you rethink your approach to life and become better. Improvement generally comes out of chaos and necessity becomes the mother of invention. A person loses a job, and this drives him to start something new and innovative. If he had not had this harsh wake up call, he could still be sitting in a mediocre job.

Ibn al Jawzi رحمه الله says that when people become too busy with the blessings given to them by Allah ﷻ and become negligent, He tests them in these blessings, pushing them towards His door begging for His help. Thus, tests become an actual blessing concealed in the form of a trial to push us out of our comfort zone.

Yahya al Bakka رحمه الله once asked, "Why do I always make Dua but I seem not to receive an answer?" He was told that Allah ﷻ loves to hear your voice calling out in Dua. Desperate times force us to resort to Dua and plead for Divine assistance.

BECOMING UNMINDFUL

Having everything come to us on a plate might makes us become complacent and stagnate, which in turn leads us to become unmindful. Two blessings are such that many people are deceived with regards to them, good health and free time. (Bukhari) Good health is taken for granted. It is only when we face a health issue that we start to appreciate the simple bodily functions that we take for granted like walking, sight and so forth. We move around doing daily tasks without thinking twice about what we are doing.

Free time is also something that we tend not to appreciate until we are deprived of it. People say that they are too busy, that there are not enough hours in the day. The reality is that it could be we don't have enough hours because our time management may be at fault. Ask a person in this age of social media who had a full day what his or her habit is at night. Often, they are sitting for 2-3 hours browsing the internet, catching up on chats, watching clips, playing games, and getting up to speed with their social media. We must then ask if these late-night hours are not actually free time?

There is a condition in this age of social media called Revenge Bedtime Procrastination. This refers to a person refusing to go to sleep because they value

the freedom of late-night hours more than the much-needed sleep. This condition often affects those who are busy like parents and overworked employees. It is seen as a way to gain control over your time and reclaim hours for yourself and a way of getting revenge for not having control of daytime hours. The reality is that we have actually found time one way or another, just that we are not using it in a productive way. Why not use this time for something beneficial?

BECOMING CONCEITED

Having abundance and not facing any challenges on earning, etc leads to complacency and being unmindful. This in turn can lead to bigger issues such as conceit or vanity. Called *ujub* in Arabic, it is a form of what is called narcissism. *Ujub* means to think of the blessings one is enjoying as tremendous and then to rely on those blessings. It means that you think good of yourself to such a degree that you become self-reliant, thinking that you are the architect of your success, and you forget the true giver of all blessings – Allah ﷻ. You become preoccupied with the blessings you have; the business savvy, the intelligence, being able to grasp concepts in your studies with ease, your ability to make a plan in any situation, and you forget to attribute it to Allah ﷻ.

The quality of relating whatever you have to Allah ﷻ keeps conceit away. The cause of having conceit is ignorance of the fact that every blessing and skill is ultimately from Allah ﷻ. "Whatever blessing you have is from Allah." (Noble Quran, 16:53) Imagine someone you love gives you a gift and you become so preoccupied with the gift that you ignore and forget the giver! How absurd. Allah ﷻ is our Beloved. He gives us gifts and it would be an injustice that we are so occupied with the gifts of wealth, intelligence, and skill that we forget the Beloved!

So *ujub* or self-conceit means that we think ourselves great due to the blessings we have. It does not necessarily mean that we look down on others or compare ourselves to them. A step up from this is *kibr* or arrogance. Here we begin looking down on others because we feel a sense of superiority. The highest form is *takabbur* or pride where we actually act as though we are better than others.

All these are serious spiritual and moral diseases which can destroy us. A Hadith of Bayhaqi lists a man being pleased with himself, having conceit and vanity as a destroyer.

"Allah has surely blessed you with His help on many battlefields, and on the day of Hunain, when your great number pleased you, then it did not help you at all, and the earth was restricted for you despite all its vastness, then you turned back on your heels." (Noble Quran 9:25) On the occasion of the Battle of Hunain, the Muslims rejoiced at the size of their army. This was in a good cause for Jihad yet the attitude of thinking we are something, and that we can achieve victory due to our numbers and military strength was frowned upon.

Attributing your success in life exclusively to yourself and not even entertaining the possibility that these blessings can be taken away at any time by Allah ﷻ is *ujub* or conceit.

Furthermore, it is not a sign of Divine acceptance that we are given the blessings of this world. In fact, if we get further away from Allah ﷻ despite having so much, if the wealth makes us restless and there is no ease, if it means that families drift apart, then we need to understand that to be an *istidraaj*, a means of giving us rope to eventually be punished severely. How many a family was united when life was simple and tough, yet they drifted apart when abundance came in? What blessing is this in reality?

ABUSE OF BLESSINGS

The next step in failing the test of abundance is to abuse the blessings which we are granted. Blessings take many forms: wealth, intelligence, health, power and authority to name a few.

"And when We intend to destroy a habitation, We command its affluent people (to do good), then they commit sins therein, and thus the word (of punishment) becomes applicable to it (habitation), and We annihilate it totally." (Noble Quran 17:16)

A large proportion of the abuse of kids and the vulnerable in society is carried out by the wealthy as is the exploitation of the weak. The sins of gambling and others have masses of wealth poured into them. The morals of society erode, and abuse of power comes into play. Employers taking advantage of desperate workers and those with military might feel they are beyond accountability for what they do. Israel has decimated villages in Palestine, people are cut off from their livelihood, enduring abuse, killings, and humiliation.

A test was conducted called the Stanford Prison Experiment. Some college students were made to act as guards and others as prisoners. By the second day abuse of power was being witnessed and by the sixth day the experiment had to be stopped as the abuse was causing trauma, cruelty and tyranny. What actually stops us from such animal behaviour except our sense of *Taqwa* or consciousness of Allah ﷻ, and the sense of accountability to Him?

At a community level we need to ask ourselves if we are at times also falling short in this regard. Not following parking rules in public spaces means that we have a sense of entitlement, that we know better, and no one can dictate to us.

Narcissism can become a mental health disorder. We start to crave

attention. We believe we are unique and feel entitled. We lack empathy for others. In relationships this is a common cause for disagreements: each party feels that they know best,

are not willing to concede any faults within them, and are unable to acknowledge the other as a human being with shortcomings. Narcissism can become an infatuation and

obsession, making yourself the centre of the universe. In the wake of this we leave a trail of hurt, destruction, trauma, harm, and frustration in those we love.

THE SOLUTION

How do we go about solving this problem?

1 Firstly, understand that success is an undeserved gift from Allah ﷻ which is not dependent on my efforts or skills. Always attribute the gifts to Allah ﷻ. Prophet Sulaiman alaihis salaam, who was blessed with the treasures of the world, said, "This is by the favour of my Lord, so that He may test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful." (Noble Quran 27:40) Qaroon on the other hand said, "This is given to me because of the knowledge I have." (Noble Quran 28:78)

2 This approach of the Prophets towards the gifts and blessings they were given answers the question of whether we are then allowed to have self-esteem. Yes, we can because we have been chosen by Allah ﷻ for those gifts, so we need to appreciate His blessings. Prophet Sulaiman alaihis salaam spoke about the blessings he enjoyed and attributed them to Allah ﷻ. There is no problem with this. Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ said, "This proves that speaking about the blessings one enjoys is a

way of showing gratitude and is not conceit or arrogance at all." Obviously, we should be careful about who we speak to about the blessings we enjoy because people can have jealousy and not everyone is our well-wisher.

3 A Sahabi ﷺ asked regarding wearing beautiful clothes and that he liked to dress well. Would this be arrogance? He was told no. Rather, for a person to reject the truth and to always feel superior to others is the actual problem.

4 To delight in a blessing one has and to feel joy is not conceit when you know that it has come from Allah ﷻ and that He can take it away. Ponder over our faults and weaknesses to balance the emotions.

5 Ibn al Jawzi ﷺ says that life is a balancing act. When you feel low and your morale is down, remind yourself of your high status in the Sight of Allah ﷻ, as a representative on earth, endowed with Imaan (faith). And if you feel

arrogance, then remind yourself of your origin as a dirty drop of semen, one choke can kill you and a bug's bite can hurt you.

6 Work on removing the conceit if you feel it creeping into your life. Repent, renew your outlook and focus on Allah ﷻ but do not throw away the blessing. That is not the correct way of dealing with the issue. Use the wealth and other blessings for good. Have self-esteem but always say that this blessing is from Allah ﷻ.

7 If someone praises you, Imam Auzaai ﷺ advises us to make this Dua which will help us keep the proper perspective, "Oh Allah, You know me better than myself. Do not take me to account for what they are saying and forgive me for the faults within me that they have no knowledge of. May we be able to handle the test of abundance and affluence by appreciating the blessings we enjoy and not allowing them to make us conceited.

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"Do not treat people except in the way you would love to be treated by them." (Tabrani)

"Love for people what you love for yourself." (Musnad Ahmad)

Searching for the TRUTH

We are living in what is described as a post-truth society. It means that the ultimate truth of knowing the reality of there being a Creator of this existence we are living through, and other truths, are deemed less important than personal or political gain.

Premodern humanity tied truth to religion. Western societies regarded the claims of the church as true when related to everything including the solar system and health. Muslims took the truth from the Noble Quran and the sublime Sunnah as expounded by the scholars.

As the period known as the Enlightenment came to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Christian world saw a change in attitude towards religion. Science replaced the church as the source of truth. Muslims also saw some change, but they still kept their faith firmly rooted in the Noble Quran and the Sunnah. The West meanwhile became agnostic, believing that nothing is or can be known about the existence of God, or atheistic (not believing in God).

In the mid-20th century science began to disappoint. Some wonderful things were found through science, but it also brought lies in its wake:

1. Whites used the authority of a supposedly infallible science

to justify racial inequality. A 19th century scientist like Harvard's Louis Agassise believed in polygenism which stated that the human races were different species. They used scientific methods to supposedly prove that whites were biologically superior to blacks.

2. Medicine also brought confusion in its wake. Thalidomide was a widely prescribed pill in the 1950's and early 1960's for the treatment of nausea in women. But by the 1960's it became apparent that thalidomide treatment resulted in severe birth defects in thousands of children.

As a result, the reliance on science as a source of the truth began to diminish. People took the truth to be their own lived experiences.

Christian society has long built itself on a culture of lies. Kids are brought up on the myth of a fat Santa Claus flying through the sky, or an Easter bunny. This is indicative of the false foundation of Christianity as a whole.

The most important truth for every human being to discover, rich or poor, male or female, is to recognise Allah ﷻ as the Creator and the One who gives us our existence. Pass this test and Paradise is promised for eternity. Fail the test, and it is the fire of Hell forever. Because this test is so critical, Allah ﷻ has ensured that whoever sincerely searches for this truth will be guided to it, no matter what the obstacles might be. Converts to Islam will tell you amazing stories of how they found the truth of Islam despite the great trials in their way. This is due to the innate nature of the Fitra or natural disposition built into every human being which guides to the truth if the person seeks it.

From Europe in the 16th Century

In the 1500's in Heidelberg in what is today Germany, a group of pastors and church scholars began to openly question the Christian belief of trinity – the idea of God being made up of three components. Christians have long struggled with this belief that goes against the fact

that God is one. It took the Council of Nicea 300 years after Prophet Esa alaihis salaam to vote to make trinity the core belief of the church. Imagine having to vote for your fundamental article of belief! One of the pastors in Heidelberg was Johann Sylvan who, along with Adam Neuser and others, questioned the trinity and the supposed divinity of Esa alaihis salaam by writing and speaking against it. Johann was caught and beheaded for this, while Adam Neuser managed to escape. He converts to Islam, travels to Istanbul and serves the Ottoman Sultan. Circumstances and society were no barrier to him finding the ultimate truth.

From the World of Idol Worship in Arabia

Salmaan Farsi ؑ was another such personality who searched for the truth and was rewarded with becoming a Sahabi. He initially studied and became a priest of Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion of Persia. He then encounters Christians who rejected the idea of the trinity. They directed him to the prophecy of the last Prophet to come and Salmaan ؑ travels to Madinah Munawwarah where he sees the signs of this in Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He accepts Islam and becomes one of the galaxy of Sahaaba.

Zayd ibn Amr ibn Naufal met the Prophet ﷺ before Prophethood. He died five years before Prophethood was granted to the Prophet ﷺ. He used to avoid idol worship, which was the custom of the Arabs in Makkah Mukarramah, would call others to worship one God and would not eat from meat slaughtered in the name of the idols. His son, Saeed ibn Zayd ؑ becomes a Muslim and is one of the Ashara Mubashara who were giving the good news of Paradise in this world.

He comes to the Prophet ﷺ saying, "You knew my father's lifestyle. Can I pray for forgiveness for him?" He was told yes, that is no problem. Again, societal norms and pressure were no barrier to finding the truth.

From the Heart of the British Empire

At the time when the British Empire was at its height, and it was actively exporting its colonial mindset and religion across the globe, there came people from the heart of this empire who, despite all the odds being against them, found the truth of Islam. One of them was Marmaduke Pickthall who died in 1936 as Muhammad Pickthall. He was a British novelist held in high esteem by authors like DH Lawrence and HG Wells. He declared his Islam publicly in 1917 in West London and went on to produce one of the first translations of the Noble Quran in English. His father was a reverend, yet he was guided to the truth. He defended the rights of the Palestinians openly in 1917 at the time of the Balfour Declaration in which the British government first announced its support of a home for the Jews in Palestine.

Sheikh Abdul Hakeem Murad (formerly Timonhly Winters) is a British convert to Islam. He delivered the recent Eid al Fitr lecture (2024) in Cambridge, UK, attended by a large crowd of Muslims, and said, "In 1907 Imam Abdullah Quilliam, a 19th century British convert to Islam who founded England's first Mosque, addressed an Eid at the University Arms Hotel in Cambridge just across from where we are today, and there were only seven people." Just over 100 years later, with all the chances being against them, people found Islam in the UK and the Eid crowd was perhaps a couple hundred.

The Age of Distorted Realities

We are living in a time of deception and false information. Artificial Intelligence and fake news adds up to an exhausting world of tangled lies and the post-truth of social media. In the build up to the era of Dajjal, who is the great deceiver, the setting is being put in place for an age of total confusion. The Hadith warns of smaller liar and impostors who will appear before Dajjal. It also predicts the age of lies, "There will come to the people years of treachery, when the liar will be regarded as honest, and the honest man will be regarded as a liar; the traitor will be regarded as faithful, and the faithful man will be regarded as a traitor; and the Ruwaibidah will decide matters." It was asked, "Who are the Ruwaibidah?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "Vile and evil men who control the affairs of the people." (Ibn Majah)

It is people's nature to be gullible. No matter how much we claim to be savvy and smart, scams are still often successful. Dajjal will be able to exploit that gullibility and deceive in ways no one else could before. The realities will be distorted. People's nature is that we are looking for Paradise on earth, for comfort and an easy life. Dajjal will appear to offer that dream but his Paradise will actually be the flames of fire. He will present a virtual reality which will be the direct opposite of reality. This will be an age of confused realities and truths.

Kipling said in his poem, A Legend of Truth: "Once upon a time, the ancient legends tell, Truth, rising from the bottom of her well, Looked on the world, but, hearing how it lied, Returned to her seclusion horrified."

This sums up the age of overwhelming lies and deception the world is experiencing.

Looking Beyond the Lies

Yet, again as through history, despite the circumstances being stacked against them, many youngsters and others especially in the US, UK and Europe are not being deceived by their government's standing with Israel and its ongoing genocide. Hundreds of students and lecturers at some of the most prestigious universities are standing with Palestine despite police brutality and arrests, despite losing funding, with their careers, opportunities and jobs on the line, despite the worn-out charge of being anti-Semitic being applied to them. In the search for the truth, amidst all the state and media propaganda, the conversion rate of people accepting Islam in Europe has soared since the Gaza War of 2023.

On the other hand, the US and its allies have dropped 337,000 bombs on other countries in the last 20 years. This equates to 46 per day for 20 years! Yet their state propaganda apparatus calls others terrorists. The lines between facts and fiction are increasingly being blurred.

Tufayl ibn Amr al Dawsi ؓ was a chief of his tribe. He came to Makkah Mukarramah at a time when the Quraish were determined to stop the message of the Prophet ﷺ spreading. The Quraishi leaders welcome him to the city and begin their propaganda campaign, warning him not to listen to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He was convinced of their claims and said that he would not approach him. He went to perform Tawaaf

at the Ka'bah and stuffed cotton wool in his ears to not hear the message of Islam. He saw the Prophet ﷺ praying Salaah and was captivated. He went closer and some of the words of the Noble Quran penetrated the cotton wool. He went to the Prophet ﷺ, heard him read Surah Ikhlaas and Falaq and was won over to Islam.

A Society of Truth

In this time of deception and confusion, we need to more than ever, be a society that stands for the truth in even the small things.

1. A Hadith tells us, "The one who creates a false impression of receiving what he has not actually been given, is like one who wears two clothes of falsehood." (Muslim) This might seem like a harmless lie but has far reaching consequences for a truth-based society.

2. Ibn Masud ؓ said,

"It is not correct to lie, neither in seriousness nor as a joke. None of you should promise his child something and then not give it."

The building blocks of a truthful society is how we interact with children. Here we are told to speak the truth and keep our promises. These are the key ingredients for a community of truth. People feel safe in truthful

communities. We need to rise above our struggle with the lies, bribes, manipulation, exaggeration, and propaganda bombarding us.

The Hadith tells us that, "Truth leads one to piety and piety will lead one to Paradise. A person will continue to speak the truth until he will be a truthful person." (Bukhari) We need to hold firm to the truth and honesty in all daily activities including business. A Hadith of Bukhari informs us that the two parties to a business deal have the option of changing their minds until they part. If they were honest and open, the deal will be blessed. If they conceal details and tell lies, the blessing of the deal will diminish.

Be committed to the truth. Find people of the truth and be in their company. If we ever hope to pass the test of Dajjal's deception, we need to urgently build these qualities now. In the build up to elections, we need to look beyond the false promises being made, but more importantly, we need to make the choice of following our principles at the possible risk of losing material comforts. This is especially true when some political parties are willing to openly side with the Israeli aggression and human rights violations when even the international court acknowledges the ongoing genocide. When Dajjal comes he will offer economic freedom and food security at a time of great suffering. If we cannot pass these preliminary tests, how can we hope to pass the critical ones closer to the Last Day?

HADITH

VERIFICATION SERIES 15

In this series we bring you a selection of topics from hadithanswers.com



TO EAT THE LIVER FROM ONE'S ANIMAL OF SACRIFICE (QURBANI/ UDHIYAH)

Question: Is the habit of eating from the liver of the Qurbani animal proven in the Hadith?

Answer: Sayyiduna Buraydah رضي الله عنه reports that "Nabi ﷺ would not go for the 'Eidul Fitr Salah without eating something. On the day of 'Eidul Adha, he would not eat anything until he returned [from the 'Eid Salah]."

(Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadith: 542, Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah, Hadith: 1426, Sahih Ibn Hibban, Hadith: 2812, Mustadrak Hakim, vol.1 pg.294)

Although this narration merely states that on the day of 'Eidul Adha, Rasulullah ﷺ would not eat until after the Salah, the same Hadith appears with the following addition in Sunanud Daraqutni (Hadith: 1715) with the following words:

'... On the day of 'Eidul Adha, he would not eat anything until he returned [from the 'Eid Salah], and eat from his animal of sacrifice.

Hafiz Ibnul Qattan رحمته الله has declared it as authentic (sahih).

(Bayanul Wahmi wal Ihm, Hadith: 2531. Also see: Nasbur Rayah, Hadith: 2796 and Talkhisul Habir, vol.2 pg.84)

This version specifically mentions eating from the Qurbani animal.

Mention of eating from the liver of the Qurbani animal appears in a weak version of the same narration in As-Sunanul Kubra of Bayhaqi, vol.3 pg.283.

Despite its weakness, it can be used to understand which part of the animal was referred to in the above authentic narrations. Although one is at liberty to eat from any part of the animal.

And Allah ﷻ Knows best.

SHOWING MERCY TO ANIMALS WHEN SLAUGHTERING

Question: Is this authentic: Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Whoever shows mercy to an animal when slaughtering, Allah Ta'ala will have mercy on him on the Day of Qiyamah."

Answer: Imam Tabarani رحمته الله has recorded this Hadith on the authority of Sayyiduna Abu Umamah (radiyallahu 'anhu). 'Allamah Haythami رحمته الله has declared the narrators reliable. Imam Bukhari رحمته الله has recorded this Hadith in Al Adabul Mufrad with slight variation in the wording.

(Al Adabul Mufrad, Hadith: 381, Al Mu'jamul Kabir, Hadith: 7913, Majma'uz Zawaid, vol. 4 pg. 33)

Also see: Al Adabul Mufrad, Hadith: 373 and Majma'uz Zawaid, vol. 4 pg. 32-33 for similar Hadiths.

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LESSON OF RAMADAAN GENEROSITY

As we move beyond Ramadaan, one of the lessons that we need to carry forward is the quality of generosity. The Prophet ﷺ was described as, "the most generous of people, and he would be at his most generous in the month of Ramadaan." (Muslim)

Perhaps the ease with which we could do our acts of worship in Ramadaan, and the blessings we experienced, could have been in some way due to our generosity and charity.

When a person faces a climate of fear, insecurity, and financial instability, it can lead to paranoia and irrational decisions, as he tries to secure his wealth, property and sources of income with increasing desperation. One of the first good qualities that tends to fall by the wayside in such a climate is spending in charity. The opposite is actually true: charity helps bring calm, serenity and economic stability. In this article, we explore some of the benefits of charity and generosity and examine why we should make them indispensable parts of our lives.

Humanity across the spectrum acknowledges the benefits of charity:

1. "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another." (Charles Dickens)

2. Charity benefits the giver first: 40% of an individual's happiness stems from actions we choose to do. Bob Holmes states that money can buy a degree of happiness, but once you can afford to feed, clothe, and house yourself, each extra rand makes less and less of a difference. In the past half a century, the average income has skyrocketed in industrialised countries, yet happiness levels have remained static. Once your basic needs are met, money rarely seems to boost happiness. Yet, there is a

way money can buy happiness, he says. Once you spend money on helping others, this has a positive effect on your own happiness.

3. In a study on charitable giving, it was found that when people donated to a worthy cause, the midbrain region lit up. This is the part of the brain responsible for pleasure rewards. This illustrates the link between charitable giving and experiencing pleasure.

4. "The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you don't expect to sit." (Nelson Henderson)

One of the secrets to gaining complete benefit from charity is to consider it of more value to the one spending than the one receiving.

1. Al Shabi رحمہ اللہ says, "Someone who gives in charity should see himself as more in need of Allah ﷻ's rewards than the poor person is in need of the charity."

2. Imam Ghazali رحمہ اللہ observes, "A person who understands the reality of charity will stop seeing himself as benefitting anyone but himself as he spends his wealth to show his love for Allah ﷻ, to purify his soul and to give thanks for the wealth he enjoys. There can be no dealings between himself and a poor person unless he sees himself as the one deriving benefit."

3. Ibn al Qayyim رحمہ اللہ mentions, "If the one giving charity knew that his charity falls in the Hand of Allah ﷻ before the hand of the poor, the delight of the one giving would be more than the one taking."

Tough times force a person to look for a means of security and giving in charity has that quality of securing a person.

1. "A person's needs are fulfilled by Allah ﷻ as long as he fulfils the needs of his brother." (Mujam al Kabir)

2. Ibn al Qayyim رحمہ اللہ mentions something amazing, "Charity has a remarkable effect. It can ward off difficulties from the sinful, the unjust and even the disbeliever."

The divine system of this world is that no one lives and survives in isolation. We live as interdependent beings,

leaning on some for assistance, and lending support to others.

1. There are people whom Allah ﷻ has created for the sole purpose of fulfilling people's needs and helping them in difficulties. They will have no worries on the Day of Judgement, nor will they have anything to fear.

2. The hadith of Tabrani tells us that nothing distresses the poor when they are hungry or in need of clothes more than the indifference and neglect of the rich who do not pay what is due from them. They will be taken to task for the neglect of their obligations to help. Charity in the form of Zakaat is compulsory, which if paid in full, should see to the basic needs of the community to ensure that no one starves.

3. Besides Zakaat, there are other calls upon our wealth as outlined by Ibn Umar رضی اللہ عنہ. Ibn Hazam رحمہ اللہ says that if Zakaat is not enough to meet the needs of the community, the Muslim government can enforce an added cost on the rich to provide food and clothing to the poor.

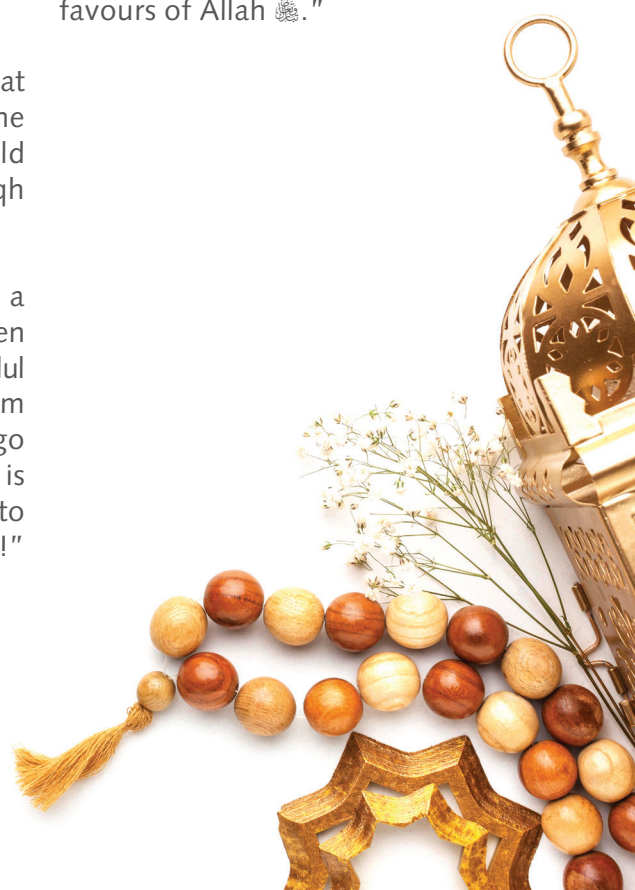
4. Another Hadith informs us that if there are people in need, the ones who have excess should share with those in need. (Fiqh al Sunnah)

5. Morally it does not behove a Muslim to be living in ease when people close by are starving. Abdul Qadir Jailani رحمہ اللہ said, "You claim that you have faith, yet you go to sleep while your neighbour is starving, and you have a lot to spare yet you give him nothing!"

6. "A man is not a perfect believer who fills his stomach while his neighbour is hungry." (Al Adab al Mufrad)

Wealth is a bridge that rescues us from destruction. It would be foolish to spend an entire lifetime strengthening the bridge itself while ignoring its actual purpose. Wealth, if spent on helping others, will reap benefits for us in this world and the next. Ibn Masud رضی اللہ عنہ narrates, "People will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement naked, and as hungry, thirsty and tired as they ever were. Whoever gave someone something to wear for the sake of Allah ﷻ will get clothes. Whoever fed someone will get food, whoever gave someone a drink, will get to drink, and whoever worked hard for the sake of Allah ﷻ will be given comfort."

Abdul Qadir Jailani رحمہ اللہ outlines the true thanks for wealth, "Merely offering verbal thanks is not sufficient. Real thanks is to comfort the poor by giving of what you have. The Muslim knows that the beggar was sent by Allah ﷻ so that the giver can gain from the favours of Allah ﷻ."



Among the benefits of charity is the protection of one's wealth

The survival instinct in man is to protect his wealth and income. Logic would seem to dictate that we stop spending in charity to ensure this, but the Divine system decrees otherwise.

1. Ibn Hajar رحمہ اللہ says, "When wealth is hoarded, it brings ruin. Those who spend in charity gain increase."

2. The Hadith teaches us to give charity when there is an eclipse which causes alarm and unease, and to turn to Salaah. Ibn Mulaqqin رحمہ اللہ says that from this we see the proof of giving in charity especially at the time of fear to repel difficulties.

3. Whoever gives much in charity. Allah ﷻ Himself looks after his property after his death. (Ihya Uloom al Deen)

4. "Protect your possessions by paying Zakaat, treat your sick by giving charity, and face the advancing waves of calamities with Dua and crying to Allah ﷻ in humility." (Abu Dawood)

5. "Treat your anxieties and sorrows with charity. Through this, Allah ﷻ will mend your damages and help you against your enemies." (Kanz)

6. "Withholding Zakaat causes famine to follow." (Tabrani)

Charity has another unique quality of drawing a person closer to Allah ﷻ and enveloping him with piety.

1. Abdul Aziz ibn Umair رحمہ اللہ said, "Prayer takes you halfway down the path to the Court of Allah ﷻ, fasting takes you to the entrance, and charity allows you to enter into the Court."

2. Those who did deeds of kindness to others will be gathered on the Day of Judgement and told, "All your sins are forgiven. You were sources of good to people in the world, so gift acts of goodness to whoever you wish today." (Istina al Maroof)

3. People will be drawn up in rows to enter the fire of Hell. A person among them will see a man in the rows of Paradise and will say to him, "Do you remember the good turn I did to you in the world?"

The man of Paradise will acknowledge this, take him by the hand and say, "Oh Allah, this man did an act of goodness to me in the

world." It will be said to him, "You take him by the hand and enter him into Paradise." (Istina al Maroof)

4. If you bring joy to a Muslim, an Angel is created who worships Allah ﷻ. In the grave, the Angel comes to him and says, "I am the joy you brought to someone. I will remove your anxieties, keep you steadfast on faith, bear witness for you on the Day of Judgement, intercede with Allah ﷻ on your behalf, and show you your place in Paradise."

5. Imam Nawawi رحمہ اللہ says that charity is a proof of faith for the one giving it out.

6. "Whoever pays Zakaat on his wealth willingly every year, will taste the sweetness of faith." (Hadith)

7. Shaiq Balkhi رحمہ اللہ said that he searched for a way to easily cross the Bridge of Sirat on the Day of Judgement and discovered it in fasting and charity.

One of the lessons we need to take from Ramadaan and bring into our daily lives is that of generosity and charity. Ibn al Jawzi رحمہ اللہ laments the man who only wants to give charity on his deathbed. He asks, "What does he expect from this in reality?"



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